

THE OPPRESSION of the POOR,

violent perverting of justice, turning the needy from their right, faithfully discovered in the CASE and TESTIMONY of ROBERT ANDERSON, the disinherited laird of Crookston, near Glasgow; who was wronged out of his father's lands and his wife's fortune by Robert Pollock magistrate of Paisley, Jarvie of Brakenhills, and others, who bought up his debts, wrested his money, spoiled his credit, leaving his family without house, habitation, nor subsistence.

When my deplorable case (the first from Scotland ever was appealed to parliament by the friendship and compassion of gentlemen free-masons, &c.) by treachery was turned from Westminster to money or friends, having no council to set forth my case; in Britain, where justice, freedom and liberty is said to run a stream from the king to the beggar. By deceit and violence we are driven from our fields and dwelling-place, justice and necessity tell us, that the discovering the born-down truth of God and the glory of covetous men, is doing honour to God and justice to men, who are robbed and left in misery, expecting his Majesty, in the morning of his reign, and all of interest and compassion, regard the cry of the needy, turned from judgment, suffering arguments to the covetousness of those who enjoy our wealth, the destroying practice is here set forth, as a testimony against all that work privately for the wealth of the helpless.

Though our case and testimony appear weak and imprudent, know, under the heavy rod of violent oppression I write the plain truths I stand, before that Law-giver who chargeth his deputies on to execute justice in the morning, and deliver him that is oppressed from the hands of the oppressor; and declares, he that oppresses the poor reproacheth his Maker: therefore the insnaring lawyers, who, by deceitful witnesses, and art of lawyers, turn men from their right, cannot pervert him whose judgment is according to truth.

In all countries robbery and accidental losses are often repaired. The greatest of criminals is allowed advocates to their exculpation; there ever an instance of any so harassed, and yet taken to court, appealed to parliament by the public, and betrayed of a fair trial. Such degrees of cruelty were never suffered, neither shall hereafter more faithfully report. If those who handle the law sword of justice, and the free masons and merchants of London, keep it over in silence, they'll answer to him by whom princes demand justice, and at their gates (like important Mordecai) will we present complaint, that none after us, when robbed and spoiled, expect release from the laws of man, but adieu to fortune, friendship, and Christian compassion, and welcome poverty and reproach.

Our sufferings and recommendations would entitle any person to contributions of the very Heathens, being descended from those counted it more blessed to give than receive. We

We humbly present our case and testimony to all denominations and takes such price therefor as their discretion shall offer: and satisfy the censure of a jealous world, the steps and proof admitted in this scene of destruction, the principal certificates hereto subjoined and recommendations from city to city, we are ready to produce, which if quarrelled, are willing to accept of confinement till the same be purified from the place of our nativity.

N. B. Our case is printed or sold by none without my order; I am present in town, ready to produce the vouchers of our complaint who, with my suffering family, who have no other subsistence but providence than the price hereof, lodges at

IN the year 1715 I was born third son of Thomas Anderforn Crookhill. My eldest brother, upon whom my father's estate was settled, died in the year 1741, and left a son; my second brother absconded for debt in the year 1744. When my father died I paid all his debts, and likewise his funerals, which, together with provision and that of my deceased brother's, to which I was entitled, made me principal creditor on the estate. My wife and I being then over-seen in selling her lands to Brodie of Haddinghead and Caldwell of Lochside, who, joining with one Robert Barclay, uncle to my nephew the heir, who was possessing his substance, searched out all my debts, got the money arrested, and stopped payment by suspension. In the 1752 my nephew died, and the succession opened to my second brother James, who, with consent of creditors, sold the lands to me; but the said Barclay and Caldwell, envying me of my purchase, seduced my brother, who was naturally silly and extravagant; gave him 3 l. sterling to make away our tract of sale, and to sell the lands to them and Robert Pollock, a magistrate of Paisley, who engaged to free and relieve him of his forebargain with me. The ungenerous means Barclay, Caldwell, and Pollock took to ruin me, and make good their enterprise, was buying up my debts, discouraging my friends from supporting me; and, pretending a right from my said brother, brought a groundless action against me of 400 l. sterling, for alledged intermeddling with the effects of my father, elder brother, and nephew; upon which I raised arrestments, and stopped payment of all my money. This we have ruined my cause and family, had not Lord Craufurd, who served as undertaker of mason-work, appointed his lawyer to appear for me, who obtained reduction of Mr. Pollock's titles, being fraudulent; and by many interlocutors found me intitled to the lands which were often reclaimed, twice suspended, and at last remitted to the inner-house, alledging necessity made my brother find another merchant, as I and two bailsmen were not good for 100 l. sterling payable to his creditors. A conjunct proof being allowed, accordingly I made it appear, by nine witnesses, we were good, and dismissed many unexamined. One Montgomerie, my brother's adviser, the said Barclay, swore they did not think us good. Our parish minister then differed about the reader, who debauched many young women at his school: being a parent, I thought it my duty to oppose and dismiss such a wretch. Our minister was then trans-

to Paisley, and being directed to Mr. Pollock's agent's house in Edinburgh, the time of the general assembly, and deponed six months for my proof was concluded, that now, after any information he could find, we were not sufficient, contradicting three of his elders (who were cited against me), his brother-in-law, and many good men cited for me. This had such weight with the late Lord President, &c. that sentence went against me. I then presented a reclaiming petition, and produced my claim upon the lands, the vouchers of my wife's money which they had artfully stopt, with a letter from my brother's creditors, declaring that I produced and consigned the money. That he and I wrote him jointly sundry letters, desiring him to come and receive it, which he declined, and sold the lands to Mr. Pollock without their consent, offering to find bail at their Lordships pleasure, or to pay the money, and produced John Maxwell, Esq; of Williamwood his letter for the sum, with bundles of letters wrote by Mr. Pollock, searching for my debts and discouraging my friends, saying, if their Lordships had any doubts, to allow a proof at large of the fore said facts and circumstances. This petition being refused, I was violently dispossessed of one of the farms and a tenement of houses. My family being cast upon the care of friends, I was advised to go abroad for relief, and went on board of the Royal Widow of Clyde, bound for the West Indies; she being oft driven back by tempests, and I being afflicted with trouble and anguish of mind, and finding myself unfit for going abroad, returned to my distressed family, and found one of my children was dead, and buried at the expence of the public. My restless enemies, though they had got my all, were not satisfied. Mr. Pollock persuaded Ralston of Ralston, Esq; his nephew-in-law, my wife's cousin-german, in whose hands her money to this day remains, to grant a warrant for comprehending me. Being bred a merchant and free mason, they, and the gentlemen of sundry counties, out of compassion contributed money, caused execute letters of appeal, and 40 l. sterling was remitted to Edinburgh and London. Passing through Edinburgh I was recommended by William Douglas, Esq; of Castle temple, to the Earl of Galloway, then Grand Master over Scotland, who chearfully undertook to lay my case before the lodges of Edinburgh, and contribute for my relief, being informed the cause could not be heard before April; but that very day a friend telling me, that a scheme was on foot to bring on the cause before London before my papers, my lawyer, or I could be there, I set off directly. Having little money, I obtained a pass from the Provost of Edinburgh, and other credentials for subsistence on the way; but for loss of time I could not attend upon the lodges, and was under the hard necessity of asking victuals and lodging in charity, till I arrived in London the 17th February, having only two-pence in my pocket. My agent (who many thinks slighted the cause) told me the respondent's agent, unknown to him, had got the day appointed for trial, so that the cause was first in the roll, and had not time to interfact, nor money sufficient to procure council. He formed a petition, which I signed and swore to the verity of, why I was unprepared. The Lord Advocate, and Counsellor York, so represented the respondent's Case, that my Petition was refused, and my appeal rejected.

rejected, to the total ruin of my poor family, who can do nothing but mourn for what they are defrauded of.

Mr. Pollock's cruelty is still further to be observed. Finding to be supported by the free masons, he directly commenced malice, which he formerly disdained, and made the same known, craving money should not be given to one brother to go to law with another, and so soon as I appeared in London, the masons of the city, and others, were advertised to pay no regard to strangers craving assistance in law-suits. This advantage seems to put me beyond the reach of further cruelty, had not Lord Eglington and Colonel Muir-Cabell supplied me. Returning to my friends, I told them, that if their interest could not procure me a fair and successful hearing, or any way of bread, my family could stand it out no longer. I having part of a house in the town of Beith, my partners gave me possession, my wife was furnished with some malt, and sold ale, by which I got subsistence, waiting till providence made it better. This made way for further stroke. As one Harvie of Brakenhills obtained a ground decree of 700 merks against the widows and minors of Robert Campbell who were partners in this house, Harvie so harrassed them by imprisonment, &c. moved the compassion of John Johnston of Hoddington, and others, who agreed Harvie's ill-founded debt at 300 merks, the one half they instantly paid, and granted bill for the other half, but Harvie, after the receiving the money, pretended he could not then deliver up his papers with a discharge; and, to confirm the bargain, they consigned the bill in the hands of Harvie's brother-in-law, who delivered up so soon as Harvie produced his papers properly discharged: yet Harvie, in place of fulfilling his bargain, took the widow's money, and stole out an adjudication, including not only this house where I lived to be the property of the said widow and minors, but also another tenement, value 100 l. sterling; and after the untimely turn of my affairs, this Harvie, and my former opponents, prevailed with a messenger to send me a summons of ejection, inclosed in a letter, which came to my wife when I was from home. They made her believe they were in sport, till Harvie came with a party on the 10th of May 1760, and turned us to the streets, and now enjoys the widow's money and both those subjects, by which he ruined the widow and fatherless, and left my family, who had suffered very hard before, only the rock for shelter, destitute of all support. If such measures be not punished by man, they will not escape the judgment of God; and we crave that no man may take this complaint upon trust, but search the same to the bottom. If any nobleman, or other person of mention, contradict me in any particular, I am ready to suffer as an example. Why should I reproach any person wrongfully? or why should my unhappy family be harrassed by covetous oppressors, and no man lay it to heart?

May therefore all denominations that is possessed of humanity and compassion, (especially the city of London, where I suffered the greatest hardships) speedily redress those grievances, and rescue the destitute from the dunghill of robbery and oppression, and give the blessing of my family, who are deprived of their right, and left in misery, having several times concluded to perish for want

will rest with you. In respect whereof I the suffering author
am your humble petitioner. ROBERT ANDERSON.

Having given a memorial of my matchless case, I shall conclude to each of my powerful, eminent adversaries: And as Mr. Pollock, by such practice, is become a terror to mankind, I shall give him the preference. Did God ordain magistrates to do justice between man and man, and leave them to covet and disappoint others of their property? You have no excuse. I came to Paisley once and again, and before witnesses offered you 20 guineas to drop your covetous intentions; and told, had you performed the last duty to your father, paying his debts and funeral charges, as I had done, and the principal creditors on his hands: had your brother, by advice of creditors, agreed, that you should succeed to the estate, you would think me very indiscreet were I to follow your example. As you had imposed on my weakly brother to disinherit me, and done all in your power to render me unfit to follow forth my bargain; and told, should I procure assistance in charity, by the memory of my predecessors, I would not yield my property, but discover your unchristian practice to the world, in doing of which I am too late; but let all after me, who are wronged and distressed by crafty oppressors, take warning and cry in time. Most ingratelously you wrote to the laird of Williamwood, Shedden of Guff, Shedden of Netherward, Stevenson of Shitterflat, and many others in Glasgow and Kilmarnock, desiring them not to support me, but if they had any bonds or bills on me to sell them to you; which letters lie in Process. You artfully prevented me from receiving my wife's tocher, which was sufficient to have cleared the bargain, I having the claim of 40 l. Sterling upon bailie Fulton by the death of his brother, which was referred to the lairds of Williamwood and Newton. No sooner had these gentlemen passed sentence, than you secured the money, and the bygone rents when the cause went with me, by discouraging the tenants from paying me; and when you cited them before the Admiral in two days warning, demanding 200 l. Sterling, they were content to come in your mercy.

When you was told, if I had friends or money I might make an appeal, and desired you to allow me a house to live in, your reply was, "I should have hell first; and if I should appeal to hell you would follow me." But I appeal to the righteous lawgiver; and although you deceive his deputies on earth, you cannot deceive him. If such perfidious practice becomes a magistrate, who pretends to be a gentleman, a free mason, and a trader, you are a qualified person. None but your own favourites chused to purchase any of the farms or houses from you, and they violently dispossessed me of one of the farms, and a house and shop. I desire those who covet another man's houses and fields, when they reap the same, to consider Job xxxi. 38, 39. "If my land cry against me, or that the furrows likewise thereof complain; if I have eaten the fruits thereof without money, or have caused the owners thereof to lose their life," &c. And know that we the owners thereof were violently driven from our all, our lives are only a lingering and painful death. God is witness these five hard years, when you ruined our credit by stopping all our money, how often we suffered till our very sight began to fail, almost concluding to

to perish in want. Never any was more loth to complain till that night you set the press gang on me. Our friends coming to see us, found us without money, fire, or victuals. We cannot present seven ewe lambs, as Abraham did, to bear witness against Aibmelech, who had violently taken from him a well; but the waters that run, and the willows that grow thereon, will witness against you; even the stones will cry out of the wall, and the beams of timber will answer them. Our weary and painful journeys, wandering for subsistence, while you are feasting on our wealth, if they prove not a snare in time to eternity, they'll neither increase your joy, nor yet appease the never-dying worm. If you come short of eternal rest, you exceed Ahab and Jezebel. They offered Naboth value for his vineyard, which you never did to us. When other inventions happened to fail you, you engaged our disaffected minister, who astonishingly swore contrary to his brother-in-law, three of the elders, and many others, setting their testimonies, my bailsmen, and me at naught. Such practisers either deny the God of heaven, or as Lucifer, who said in his heart, he would exalt his throne above the stars of God, and sit upon the mount of the congregation, and be like the Most High. It seemed a light thing for you to overcloud the rock of justice, pervert the law of God and nations, eclipse the judgment of men, and frustrate the compassion of gentlemen, making them spend their contributions in vain; "but know for all that, that God will judge the world in righteousness." Matth. xxv. 41. If those set on the left hand must depart to everlasting fire only, because when Christ and his little ones were strangers on earth, they took them not in when naked, sick and in prison did not minister to them, &c. where do you expect to appear? and all who supported you to harass and ride over our heads, not only denying justice and equity, but violently taking the fields and resting place of our predecessors, who appeared valiant for the truth; the law of God and redeeming love was their song in the house of their pilgrimage, exposing us their offspring to distress, when we claimed redress thro' Christian compassion and the memory of our predecessors. You robbed us of God's treasures, as the violent mother prevents the cry of her child. By extraordinary agents you timely prevented our cry, by setting forth the cause in my brother's name, bringing it in at London before I was prepared, advertising the free masons, and others at London to pay me no regard. Oppressing of the poor hath grieved the spirit of God; and hath caused him to send forth his prophets to testify against the same in ages heretofore; but such degrees of heaven-daring cruelty was never known: therefore, passing over necessity, the justice of God intitles us to publish such robbery and hidden machinations, until providence raise up instruments that will restore us to our right, or carry us where the violent oppressors can hurt no more.

What I say to Rt. Barclay is, 'truly the love of money is the root of all evil'. At my brother's death, you got hold of his effects, the rents of his lands many years: and not inclining to settle accounts with me, you weeping deceitfully desired a reference, and required two weeks to state your accounts, which I granted; and that time you applied, persuading my brother to make away my contract, and

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to sell the land to your violent favourite, who bound himself to free my brother from the bargain with me. You searched out any debts due by me and my bailsmen, and appeared evidence, and declared that we were not good for any sum. You also swore you had no ill will, art nor part, was neither to lose or gain, nor give advice by word or writ to any person in the cause, and yet approve by the heirs of Caldwell of Lochside that they receive the one third of the profit and you another third.

As for Mr. Wotherspoon he ought to have supported us in recovering our predecessors inheritance, who appeared Caleb-like after one generation they correspond with another, who met often for Christian conference, tabling their joint petitions at the throne of grace, which when answered, my family will complain no more, being robbed of their earthly inheritance. Compare your conduct with God's word, Exod. xxiii. 6, 7. Prov. xxiv. 28. Prov. xxv. 18. Ezek. xxxiv. Tim. vi. 6. Consider these with the following declarations, until you and my destroyed wandering family meet where oppression and revenge shall be no more, to which time the robbed and oppress'd stranger that is turned from his right, must make his last address.
By the Honourable the Justices of the peace, for the county of Renfrew, North Britain.

PERMIT the bearer, ROBERT ANDERSON, late merchant, and undertaker of mason work at Beith, a person of good fame and reputation, with his spouse and two children, to pass from this to London, or any other parts of South-Britain, about his lawful affairs, without interruption; he always behaving as becometh. The oppression of powerful antagonists in most vexatious law-suits has reduced this poor man, and family, to great want, and misery, and renders him a proper object to the charity of all good people. Given at William-wood, the 4th June, 1761.

JOHN MAXWELL Esq. of William-wood. J. P.

WILLIAM M'DOWALL Esq. of Castlesemple. J. P.

Beith, December 21. 1758.

WE subscribers, his Majesty's commissioners of supply, and the members of the session of Beith, hereby declare, That in a cause between the bearer Robert Anderson, and bailie Pollock in Paisley, concerning the lands belonging to the bearer's father, the consequence hath borne so hard upon the bearer, that thereby he hath lost his all, and his family cast upon the care of friends, the proceedings of bailie Pollock and his confederates being so ungenerous, hath moved the compassion of many gentlemen, and others of humanity in this and the neighbouring counties, who have contributed money, and are doing all in their power to have the cause appealed to parliament for redress. And we declare, the bearer from his youth hath behaved himself virtuously, and as he belongs to, and was expected to have represented a singular good family, and a very great sufferer; therefore we recommend him and his necessitous family to all persons of humanity, expecting all to whose knowledge this shall come, will exert their interest both for their relief and to put a stop to such oppression for the future. As also we attest Mr. Shedden of Moris-hill, Thomas Shedden of Windy-house merchant in Beith, James Patrick merchant there, John Shedden younger of Marshland, Dr. Robert Montgomerie

brother-in-law to our late minister, Mr. Wotherspoon, Will Pollock Smith in Hazlehead, witnesses cited for the bearer; William Fulton, Robert Kerr, James Gilmour, farmers in Beith witnesses cited against the bearer, are all men of fair and unblemish characters, and good substance, sundry of which are possess of land estates to the value of twenty thousand merks. This attested by day, month, and year aforesaid,

William Symphon	} Commissioners of supply,	John Shedden	} Church Warden
John Shedden		Robert Shedden	
John Patrick		Gorge Aikenhead	
Robert Love		John Mongomerie	
		Thomas Stewart	

Renewed 1st June, 1761, by Mr Da. Mclellan minister and Jo. A. son session clk.

I Robert Love portioner of Highgate, hereby declare, that I never uttered such words as Mr. Wotherspoon mentioned in his oath viz. that I was afraid of Robert Anderson, and offering myself sure for him, in the sum of one hundred pounds sterling, in impleme of the bargain 'twixt him and his brother James; on the contrary, ever had a dear regard for him, knowing him a man well behaved and sober, and was then, as is now, both able and willing, to support him in such a sum: and notwithstanding all unjust means was taken to disappoint him of said bargain, and to break his and my credit: And sundry witnesses for Mr. Pollock swore, I had as much debt on my lands as they were worth; but to show the deceitfulness of those witnesses, I declare before God and the world, I then had only two thousand and four hundred merks on my lands, which I now sold at seven thousand merks, and purchased other lands. This I formerly declared before Matthew Shedden and Robert Black witnesses. And upon the twenty second day of May, one thousand seven hundred and sixty one years, I declare the same, being the third declaration (signed by me),

ROBERT LOVE.

I Here do certify, that the bearer, Robert Anderson merchant, sometime undertaker of mason work in Beith, is a true and worthy member of the Right worshipful Lodge of free and accepted Masons held in Beith, No. 157, he being entred apprentice, past fellow craft and raised master, &c. in all which stations he hath behaved himself in most becoming manner, and by the oppression and violence of covetous men, in expensive and vexatious law-suits, hath lost his all value more than 24000 merks, and was turned out of his house and habitation the 12th of May 1760, which makes him, with his misfortunate family, travel for bread, craving interest for obtaining redress. Therefore, we the office bearers of said lodge, recommend him to the interest and good offices of all our worthy brethren of craft, as the most distressed and suffering brother known in memory. Given under our hands and seal of our lodge Beith, September 13th 1760. James Thomson officer of excise master, Robert Black senior warden, and James Connel junior warden.

Renewed the 26th of May 1761, by James Ker master, Robert Black senior warden, and William Brown secretary.

The truth of what is above set forth is confirmed by my Lord E. Minto, and a great many masters of lodges in Scotland.

